

291 after I had been among the Yaruros for a time the women often dis-
177 carded their camisoles, even though I were present.

291 The men would normally wear a breechclout which originally was
286 woven by the women from the fibers of the moriche palm leaf, but
462 now it consists of a piece of cloth. Formerly the women wove wide
belts of the same fiber for the men, but this is no longer done. The
breechclout is held in place by a string tied around the waist.

291 The women, underneath their camisoles, still wear the old-fash-
287 ioned Yaruro girdle, which is made from the fibers of the moriche
palm. The fibers, which are about 2 feet long, are fastened together
at one end. This end is slipped through a hair rope tied around
the waist, and the whole mass of fibers passes between their legs and
under the waist string. Plate 25, 4, shows a Yaruro woman wearing
one of these girdles. It is fastened in such a way that an enormous
knot is formed in the rear, and when wearing their camisole the women
have the appearance of sporting large tails.

562 The women on the whole seem to be more conservative than the
291 men in their clothing and body decorations. Below the knees and
301 around the ankles they wear a thin string, and often they have
necklaces of carved asabache figures, which are shown in plate 21.

DELOUSING TOOL

412 An implement that is in great vogue is the delousing tool shown in
515 plate 20, 2. The serrated end is used as a comb to expose the lice,
which are seized between the fingers and crushed between the teeth.
The pointed end is employed to crush blisters raised on the body by
462 mosquito bites. These tools, also fashioned by the men, are used
302 exclusively by the women to groom their menfolk and each other.

CARRYING NETS

482 Carrying nets, of the knotless variety, are woven and used to
286 carry children and food. When carrying children the net is slung
854 across the chest from one shoulder; when carrying food it is sup-
ported by the head.

COOKING

252 The culinary art among the Yaruro is poorly developed. Much
462 of the fruit and the eggs are eaten raw. Fish is eaten half raw and
the meat of the crocodiles and turtles is merely warmed over the
fire. Sometimes the meat is boiled. In the afternoon the women
who have gathered firewood are to be found in camp waiting
patiently for the men. On the hot coals they will have eggs and
changuango. If the hunt is successful, and no hunt is considered
2 [see category 116, end plate 15, - Analyst]

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"Here, a son-in-law will take care of me now!" Then the Yaruros lived. The shaman had a nephew and a son. The nephew fell in love with his own sister and married—he was changed into a jaguar and she into a snake (!). If it had not been for this there would not have been any snakes and jaguars. Human beings should not marry their own sisters. It was ordered by Kuma. Animals are different.

Then one man found a tree with all the fruits on it. He did not tell the others. A white man appeared on horseback. Said he would come back in eight days. He came back in a boat. Scattered seeds everywhere. Thus he changed the country. Before it was all open savanna, but now forests and agricultural products grew.

India Rosa taught the women. God taught the men. God wanted to give the horse to the Yaruros, but they were afraid to mount, so he gave it to the Racionales instead.

KUMA

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Presumably, Kuma is anthropomorphic. The only ones among the Yaruros who have any knowledge of this mythical being who is responsible for the world are the shamans. These individuals are loath to discuss what they see in their dreams, claiming that all they have to say about such things are said during their shamanistic performances. Besides, they claim that they do not remember what they see during their trances.

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Nevertheless, on the rattles appear graphic representations of what Kuma is supposed to look like. In all cases, she seems to resemble a human being, standing with her arms extended upward in greeting to her people. Such figures are represented on the gourd rattles shown in plate 24 and figures 25, 26, 27. It was explained that the lines appearing on the body of Kuma represent body painting and ornaments.

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Of all the godheads or spirit forces of the Yaruros, Kuma is the most clear-cut. She is the creator of all things, and everything emanates from her. Her associates, Puaná, Itciai, and Hatchawa, function according to the laws of Kuma. Apparently they are not able to do anything without her consent, but occasionally she may be tricked. For instance, when Hatchawa decided to give fire to the people he threw a live fish into Kuma's fire. The wriggling of the fish scattered the coals, which the people seized and carried away.

Kuma is represented neither as an indulgent mother nor as an entirely benevolent creature in the myths. It is Hatchawa and Puaná who favor human beings. In fact, Kuma was opposed to peopling the earth with the human race. In spite of this there is no

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787 that follow describe this land as well as the gods and the spirits of the Yaruros.

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● 301 It is to be noted that it is the ornaments worn by Kuma rather than the person of the gods which are described. We are told that she wears golden necklaces, fine clothes, and belts and bands typical of the ancient Yaruro woman's costume. She is represented vaguely as being in the form of a human being, who, on the other hand, is never described. Try as I might, I was not able to obtain any idea of her appearance. Hatchawa, as we know, is a little boy, but Itciai again lacks any definite form.

787 The shaman claims that during his ordinary life he has no idea of what he sees in the Land of Kuma, therefore these descriptions can only be gathered from due sources through the songs which he sings in shamanistic performances and through the figures which he etches out on the shamanistic gourd rattle. Several of these rattles are reproduced on plate 24 and figures 25, 26, 27.

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533 The shaman does not claim special power to reveal anything, nor does he claim to have the power to cure. He is merely a vehicle, an instrument through which the gods can visit the Yaruros by submerging themselves for the soul of the shaman. The only power that he claims is the ability to let his soul leave his body and travel to the Land of Kuma. His soulless body subsequently becomes possessed by various spirits who wish to communicate with their relatives on earth. As explained above, the shaman only sings the first songs hesitantly and in a poor voice which is in direct contrast to the violent and beautiful singing which the spirits exhibit when they are in possession of his body.

772 Kuma's Land is a perfect heaven for the Yaruro, who has endowed it with all the comforts and liberty denied to him in this world. In Kuma's Land food is abundant, the weather is ideal, there are no forests, no diseases, and most important of all, no civilized being to desolate them. We are confronted here with the creation on the part of the Yaruro of a superlative heaven which furnishes an escape for him from the woes of this life.

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177 We have noted before that primitive peoples, when faced for a time with a hopeless situation in this world, such as extinction, tend to seek and discover an escape by creating such a heaven. The Guarani sought a heaven in the West where there was no death and no persecution. More recently our own Indians on the reservations have turned to Peyoteism, which also supplies a heaven. In all these cases there is a renunciation of this world. The will to live is practically gone because there is no need to worry about maintaining life in this world, an impossible thing to do when in competition with civilization. But a heaven which cannot be touched by any civilized

535 linked, kept up rhythmic motion by bending the knees slightly and leaning forward. The men bent at the waist until the torso was horizontal, arms hanging down like apes, and made the same motion by bending at the knees. The motion was so very apelike that I wondered if the monkeys didn't enter in some way into the scheme of things. I was told that formerly they were people and when the flood came they climbed to the tops of trees, and have continued to live there ever since, gradually changing shape. When the circuiting around the pole began the men followed one another after the shaman, and the women made the outer circuit with the right hand on the shoulder of the woman in front. The right foot was stamped on the off beat.

ART

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517 Of the arts, dancing, music, carving, painting, modeling, and perhaps drama, are present among the Yaruros. Every individual in the group participates in some form of artistic expression, even in connection with objects whose function is practical rather than aesthetic; each individual attempts to make them "tsaimui", that is "pretty", "good." Great care is taken in making baskets, pottery, arrows, and bows. Singing and dancing are universally practiced also. No individual feels that his voice is too poor to participate in the singing and no individual is shy about dancing. However, social custom limits the activities of the men and women in the plastic arts. Pottery making is the prerogative of the women. The carving of stamps and realistic figures from the asabache is done by the men. The low relief carvings on gourd rattles are the special products of the shamans. Of all these activities it is this last that comes closest to being inspired.

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285 The making of baskets is woman's work. They take great pride in their workmanship, and make a conscious effort to reproduce various designs by employing several weaves. The patterns are rather limited, but then this may be due to the limited number of baskets which they make (fig. 21).

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323 Pots are frequently broken in transport, but there is also very little use for them. One or two pots per family are all that is required. The porousness of the material is desired in order to keep the water cool. These pots are generally decorated with crude broad bands of red paint. The pottery decoration is reproduced in figure 22.

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322 The women like to paint their faces. For this purpose the men make wooden stamps (pl. 22, 1), which are dipped in red-ocher paste or a blue dye and the design is impressed upon the face. The designs are entirely geometric and rectilinear.

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317 The asabache figures are of special interest because of their remarkable realism. The asabache is a black igneous material found

301 in small pieces on the banks of the Capanaparo. It is about as hard
317 to work as coal. It has much the same appearance. The carving
532 tool is the ordinary knife which, in some cases, may be a broken
301 matchete. Yet, with such crude implements, they are able to pro-
duce exquisite realistic carvings of birds, fish, and other animals.
These are generally perforated and strung into a necklace. Each
woman possesses at least a few of these carved figures, the number
depending on the industry of her husband. No symbolical signifi-
cance seems to be attached to either the painting, the carving, or to
any of the designs appearing on the stamps. There may be some
magical meaning to them, but all inquiries were answered in the
negative.

791 The gourd rattles present an entirely different manifestation. In
787 the first place, only the male shaman can use a rattle. It is, in fact,
532 the badge of shamanism. All the designs appearing on the rattle
534 represent what he sees during his visits to Kuma's land. These car-
vings are made with the point of any sharp instrument, which cuts in
just deep enough to expose the lighter colored inner wood of the
rattle.

To become a shaman one must dream of Kuma and the other gods,
and show his people that he can communicate with the godheads
when occasion demands. Perhaps looking at shamanistic practices
objectively this may mean primarily that the would-be shaman has a
fertile imagination and some artistic talent. I do not think that we
ought to doubt that he believes that he actually sees and talks with
Kuma, Itciai, and the rest of the spirit world.

791 He commemorates his dreams on the sacred rattle, carving out on
787 its surface the figures which appear in his dreams. Kuma and
532 Hatchawa dominate the decorations on the gourd rattles, and since
776 those collected came from the Puaná moiety, Puaná is also por-
trayed. In plate 24 various views of one of these gourd rattles are
shown. The large geometric figure dominating the first drawing rep-
resents Kuma; the smaller one Hatchawa. Rotating the rattle to-
ward the left we discover Puaná, the Snake.

534 In connection with these rattles one of the most interesting aesthetic
517 features is the filling in of space. All of the specimens collected and
shown in figures 25, 26, and 27 demonstrate this. In watching Lan-
daeta at work I asked him why he did so; his reply was that a properly
decorated rattle must be "tsaimui", that is "good", "proper",
"beautiful."

MUSIC

534 One would suspect that the Yaruros would have borrowed some of
177 the musical instruments employed by the Llaneros. Among the lat-
1 [See category 116, end plate 14 --- Analyst]
2 [See category 116, pp. 242-243 --- Analyst]